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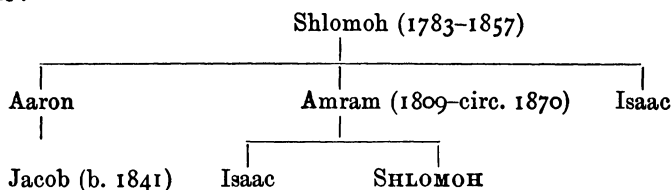
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NOTE ON *J. Q. R.*, XIV, PAGES 26 sqq.

MAY I offer a few remarks on Dr. Skinner's interesting and careful description of a newly acquired Samaritan MS. ? There is nothing of importance to add to what he has said, but after working at this literature for many years, perhaps I may be able to throw light on a few minor points.

In explaining the later colophon, on pp. 27, 28, it is important to remember that the author is thinking in Arabic, is trying to write in Hebrew and often slips into Aramaic. In מעמרות (line 2) therefore he probably has in mind the Arabic عَمَر, but the meaning is no doubt "restoration" as Dr. Skinner translates. In l. 6 "speedily" is quite right: קרוב or קריב is often used in this sense. עבדה מסכינה is the Aramaic emphatic form (which always ends in ה not א) and is the Arabic العبد الفقير (not "his servant"), an ordinary general way for a writer to describe himself. L. 9, שמש המכתב הקדוש, is not "Shammash of the sacred school," but "servant of the holy law." מכתב אבישע is the ordinary phrase for the famous roll of the law supposed to have been written by Abisha, which is almost personified, so that it is sometimes even called אב' אב'. He therefore naturally calls himself the servant of our master the law. Used alone, מכתב = תורה. ספר תורה = "The great name" is of course the Tetragrammaton. L. 10, על פי I think means "by order of." L. 11, נצעיו is rare as a name, but common otherwise. It is used of God in the phrase כל קרביה נצעיו (in early MSS. more correctly נצחיו adapted from the Targum on Exod. xv. 3 (י' איש מלחמה) where Petermann's edition should probably be emended to קרבה נצחיו. The termination is participial: e.g. בריו = שמוע = שמעיו. Thus נצעיו is the Samaritan translation of the Arabic name منصور or ناصر. L. 12, בקדוש זה התורה, might be a mistake for זאת, but קדוש התורה has become a sort of compound phrase for "the holy law," and the writer probably means בזה קדוש התורה. L. 13, שמורי, in allusion to (שמורים) the name by which the Samaritans call themselves. L. 15, יהיה יחלף עליו is simply the Arabic خلف الله عليه "may God make it up to him." L. 17, Dr. Skinner points מְסַפֵּר, and this is no doubt the simplest way of taking it. I think, however, that the writer meant מְסַפֵּר and that the whole line is an expansion of the common phrase ער אין מְסַפֵּר; "peace . . . to the number of all that God created," i. e. unbounded peace. In the acrostic on p. 31 הכון can hardly be right, as that term is never applied to Moses. It probably should be הנביא.

The family of the writer will be best shown by the following table:—



Aaron was the eldest son of Shlomoh, but for some reason did not succeed his father, probably owing to mental disqualifications. The second son Amram became second priest with his father in 1827, a common practice in recent years. On the death of Shlomoh in 1857, Amram became head priest, and, since the succession properly belongs to the elder branch, he very rightly appointed his nephew Jacob second priest in the same year. On Amram's death (I have not the date, but it was between 1861 and 1876) Jacob became head priest and made his cousin Isaac second priest—an arrangement which still continues. In 1894 Jacob had three sons, of whom the eldest, Joseph, then about 17 years of age, was mentally weak and was not to succeed to the priesthood.

The family of מרחיב (Arab. مفرج) is well known from the colophons of MSS. The man נלעי = ناصر was the son of Isaac son of Joseph son of Joshua. His uncle, Joshua b. Joseph, copied the Bodleian MS. Samar. e. 5 in A.H. 1261.

In the colophon on pp. 30, 31, Abraham is the same person who twenty years later sold a MS. now in St. Petersburg, see Harkavy's catalogue, p. 181. He is called there Abr. b. Seth, but signs his name Abr. b. Seth Aaron. He was only second priest, since the transaction took place (in A.H. 929) before Pinḥas b. Eleazar, head priest at Damascus from 915 till 945, when he removed to Nāblus where he died in 956. A son of this Abraham, named Abdallah, who was עבדה or minister (Harkavy, *ibid.*), accompanied Pinḥas in 945 as his secretary. They were a literary family. Seth-Aaron b. Isaac (it does not appear which of the two) wrote a hymn for Succoth (in the British Museum MS. Add. 19008, fol. 77); Abraham is probably the author of a few compositions and his son Abdallah wrote several pieces. With regard to the family of Abraham b. Sa'adah, my information is uncertain.

I hope the details of these obscure people are not too petty for consideration. They are difficult to collect, but perhaps the trouble is not altogether wasted if a little consecutive history is gained by it.

A. COWLEY.